一月九日，星期日，晴转化雪

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今天太阳出来了，我第一件事是跑去看雪孩子。雪孩子是上周日和爸爸堆的，站在单元楼门口的花坛边上，一直站得好好的。今天它好像矮了一点。我围着它转了一圈，看不出别的变化，就是矮了一点，围巾都滑到它的肚子上了。

中午更糟。屋檐开始滴水，嗒，嗒，全砸在雪孩子脚边，地上的雪湿哒哒地贴着一层黑灰。雪孩子的左边胳膊——那根树枝——掉下来了，它身子歪着，头也歪着，可它还是笑，那七粒排成弯线的种子还在。我把它扶正，扶完它又慢慢歪回去。我有点着急，回家问爸爸，雪孩子是不是要死了。爸爸放下碗说，雪人到了天暖的时候就会变回雪水，这是雪人的办法，不是死。我不太服气，可是也没办法。

我想了一个办法。雪孩子站在太阳底下，那它晒到太阳就化了，对不对？我请爸爸帮忙，把雪孩子挪到楼后面的背阴处去。爸爸说身子太大，搬不动，搬了会散。我们试了一次，雪人的身子裂了一道缝，赶紧又捧雪糊上。爸爸想了个新办法：把阳台上的旧雨伞撑开，用绳子拴在雪人身后的铁栏杆上，伞面斜过来，正好罩住雪人的头。这下好了，雪孩子的头顶上有一把蓝伞，像戴了一顶大帽子。我守着它看了一个下午，伞底下确实不滴水。

可是傍晚收伞的时候，我发现雪孩子的头细了一圈，脖子细得快要撑不住头了。它不是被晒化的，它一直在化，只是慢一点快一点。我蹲在它面前，跟它说，你明天还在吗。它不回答。雪孩子从来不回答。

最后我做了一件大事。我把它的胡萝卜鼻子拔下来，擦干净，带回屋放进冰箱。我还把两颗黑石子眼睛也捡回来了，放在窗台上。爸爸问，那你把雪孩子变成什么了。我说，我把它的鼻子和眼睛救出来了，剩下的让它自己慢慢回天上。爸爸摸了摸我的头，没说话。

睡前我又去窗边看。楼后面的雪孩子只剩一小堆，围巾盖在上面，像盖着被子。窗台上胡萝卜和两颗石子在台灯底下，橘的橘，黑的黑。我想起那张合影，我比剪刀手，它歪戴蓝伞。照片里它还是完整的，鼻子长长的，正在闻天。我关了灯。雪孩子，晚安。

January 9, Sunday, Clear Then Thaw

January 9, Sunday, clear then thaw.

The sun came out today, and the first thing I did was run to see Snow Child. Snow Child was built last Sunday with Dad, standing by the flower bed at the building entrance, standing just fine all along. Today it looks a little shorter. I walked around it once and could see no other change - just a little shorter, and its scarf had slid down onto its belly.

By noon it was worse. The eaves began to drip, tap, tap, all landing at Snow Child's feet, and the snow on the ground was damp with a layer of gray grit. Snow

Child's left arm - that branch - had fallen off. Its body leaned, its head leaned too, but it was still smiling; those seven seeds lined into a curve were still there. I straightened it, and it slowly leaned back. I got a bit worried, went home and asked Dad whether Snow Child was dying. Dad put down his bowl and said, when the weather turns warm a snowman turns back into water - that is the way of snowmen, not death. I did not quite accept it, but there was nothing to do.

I thought of a plan. Snow Child stands in the sun, and sun makes it melt, right? I asked Dad to help move Snow Child to the shady side behind the building. Dad said the body is too big to move, it would fall apart. We tried once, the body cracked a seam, and we hurried to pat fresh snow over it. Dad came up with a new plan: open the old umbrella from the balcony, tie it with rope to the iron railing behind the snowman, tilt the canopy across - it covered the snowman's head exactly. Now Snow Child had a blue umbrella over its head, like a big hat. I kept watch over it all afternoon, and under the umbrella there really was no dripping.

But when we took the umbrella down at dusk, I found Snow Child's head had grown a ring thinner, its neck too thin to hold its head up. It was not melted by the sun - it had been melting all along, only slower or faster. I squatted in front of it and asked, will you still be here tomorrow. It did not answer. Snow Child never answers.

In the end I did one big thing. I pulled out its carrot nose, wiped it clean, brought it inside, and put it in the fridge. I also retrieved the two black pebble eyes and set them on the windowsill. Dad asked, so what have you turned Snow Child into. I said, I rescued its nose and eyes; let the rest of it slowly go back to the sky by itself. Dad ruffled my hair and said nothing.

Before bed I checked the window again. Behind the building Snow Child was only a small heap now, the scarf lying over it like a quilt. On the windowsill the carrot and the two pebbles sat under the lamp, orange and black. I remembered that photo: me flashing a V, it tilting under the blue umbrella. In the photo it is still whole, nose long, sniffing the sky. I turned off the light. Good night, Snow Child.